

Chairwoman Manchester, Vice Chair Cutrona, Ranking Member Denson, and Members of the House Families, Aging, and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 496.

My name is Ashley Wilson and I am a mother of two children. I have received care from midwives for both of my pregnancies, deliveries, and postpartum seasons, and have had both a home birth and hospital birth.

I believe that I was able to have two natural, quick, manageable, and complication-free births because of the incredible care that I received from midwives. There are so many issues during the birthing process that can be completely avoided through proper knowledge, education, and preparation, and I believe that midwives are able to provide these things to women through the personalized care that they provide. Because of this, I believe every birthing mother should have the opportunity to choose midwifery care. I support HB 496 because professionally trained and licensed midwives should be accessible to every mother, whether she chooses to give birth at home, in a hospital setting, or at a birthing center. Women will continue to choose midwifery care, and continue to give birth at home (especially women who have had multiple children and give birth too quickly to even make it to the hospital). Because of this, it is important for home birth midwives to be properly licensed, trained, and regulated, and for them to have easy access to lifesaving medications, as well as the standard newborn medications that the hospital provides. HB 496 will ensure all of these things, thus making home births as safe as possible. It is also important for midwives to be able to collaborate with physicians to provide the best standard of care for each birthing mother, and to be recognized by hospitals, physicians, and EMS so that emergency transfers (although rare) can go as smoothly as possible. As someone who has given birth at home, but also received care from hospital providers during my pregnancy, I would have appreciated the hospital care so much more if the hospital staff had recognized my midwives as legitimate providers. Instead, I was treated with concern and even hostility for choosing to give birth at home, which was absolutely unnecessary considering that I had a low-risk pregnancy and was receiving professional care. HB 496 would not only require hospitals to recognize midwives as legal providers, but it would also ensure that midwives in Ohio were properly licensed and regulated so that they could have the confidence to do so. The next time I have a baby, I want my midwives to get the recognition that they deserve, and the resources that they need to do their job to the best of their ability.

These are the main reasons that I am choosing to support of HB 496.

Ashley Wilson